(b) it is, Government's response thereto and the steps taken or proposed to be taken for early sanction to these projects?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The proposal for environmental clearance of Western Freeway Sea Link, from Worli to Nariman Point, has been appraised and it has been decided to obtain comments of Ministry of Defence before taking a decision on this Project. Ministry of Defence has been addressed accordingly. As regards the proposal for environmental clearance of Mumbai Trans Harbour Sea Link Proejct, the information submitted by the project proponents was found to be deficient. Additional information/clarifications have been sought from the proponents.

Cultivation of Bt. Cotton

4720. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU):
SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:
SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken to popularize the use of Bt. Cotton;

(b) which varieties have been cleared for cultivation;

(c) the total area to be covered by its cultivation;

(d) whether Ministry of Health was consulted before taking decision for its cultivation; if so, the details thereof;

(e) the steps taken to ensure that the gains thereof reach the farmers in distress;

(f) whether farmers have to be educated and provided proper support required for its proper cultivation; if so, who would take the responsibility; and

(g) the stocks of Bt. Cotton in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and other States, released for sale?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) The Governemnt has accorded conditional approval for three Bt. cotton hybrid varieties developed by the Maharashtra Hybrid Seed Company (MAHYCO). These varieties are: MECH 184, MECH 162 and MECH 12. This year, MAHYCO plans to cover approximately one lakh acres by cultivation of these three Bt. Cotton varieties. Under the various conditions attached to the approval, MAHYCO has been directed to undertake an awareness and education programme *inter alia* through development and distribution of educational meterial on Bt. Cotton for farmers, dealers and others.

(d) A representative of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare is a member of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC). The report of studies conducted on environmental, food and feed safety, and agronomic evaluation have been referred to Ministry of Health & Family Welfare for their comments. The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare conclude that on the basis of data presented,from the food safety and quality point of view, there was no difference between varieties of Bt. cotton tested and conventional cotton.

(e) and (f) As stated above, under the various conditions attached to the approval, MAHYCO has been directed to undertake and awareness and education programme for farmers. In addition, the company has also been directed to provide detailed directions for use including sowing pattern, pest management, suitability of agro-climatic conditions etc. in vernacular languages in the seed packets.

(g) The MAHYCO has reported that the total quantity of seed available with it is 1,05,000 units of 450g of the three approved

hybrids. The company's plan for distribution of seeds in various States during Kharif 2002 is as under:

State	Mech 184Bt	Mech 162Bt	Mech 12Bt	Total
Andhra Pradesh	0	10000	100	10100
Gujarat	3400	8500	200	12100
Maharashtra	6000	33000	200	39200
Madhya Pradesh	4500	4000	100	8600
Karnataka	500	20500	0	21000
Tamilnadu	5000	9000	0	14000
TOTAL	19400	85000	600	105000

Storage and Purchase of Farm Produces

†4721. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have failed so far to make proper arrangement for purchase and storage of farmers produce in the country;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government have declared to give foodgrains at lower rates to certain categories of public due to non-availability of storage capacity of the stock;

(c) whether the farmers have suffered a heavy loss; and

(d) if so, whether Government would re-purchase farmer's produce, to protect them from the plundering going on in the market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (PROF. CHAMAN LAL GUPTA): (a) to (d) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.